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DAILY NEWS

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Some might call him a

DEALER IN DEATH

*But millionaire arms
king Samuel Cummings
says he helps the West*

By GEORGE NOBBE

IN WASHINGTON, Samuel Cummings, 37, told a properly shocked Senate subcommittee recently that he owns the largest private arsenal in the world—big enough to equip 300,000 troops at a moment's notice—within mortar range of the Capitol.

This big, brash, bearish young man, looking more like a Sunday school teacher than a munitions king, calmly testified that the huge weapons stock-

pile comes from throughout the world, without exaggeration, from every continent except Antarctica.

Dealing in surplus guns, planes, tanks, ships, swords and even uniforms, Cummings and his omnipresent agents have built an arms empire, buying and selling the world's surplus weapons on the proven theory that what's obsolete to one nation needn't be to another.

Right now, in nine bulging warehouses clustered along his Potomac River docks in Alexandria, Va., there are close to 400,000 pistols and rifles. There's no telling how many more are stacked up in similar collection points outside of Los Angeles and London.

International Operation

The tentacles of this sprawling munitions combine, an intricate corporate maze known as International Armaments Corp., or the Interarmco Group, reach as far as Geneva, Panama, Copenhagen, Salzburg, Monte Carlo, Pretoria, Helsinki and Buenos Aires.

Until recently, but for assassination, revolution, or both, Cummings could have had testimonials from such satisfied customers as the Dominican Republic's Trujillo, Cuba's Batista, Panama's Remon or Nicaragua's Somoza.

Among his current clients, in addition to our own NATO allies and an impressive list of pro-West European and South American countries, are Yugoslavia's Tito and Indonesia's Sukarno, along with a scattering of Mid-east potentates.

Perhaps because most people tend to think of his dealings with the unsavory customers rather than the reputable ones, or perhaps because his is a trade as old and as deadly as war itself, the wrath of Sen. Thomas Dodd, D-Conn., and his Senate Judiciary Subcommittee seems to have descended upon Samuel Cummings.

Plainly, this articulate world traveler, who neither drinks nor smokes, is no sinister gunrunner who lurks in waterfront cinemills hunting a chance to peddle a clandestine cargo of weapons, no questions asked.

To hints that he might trade with the Soviet bloc, he says that though he has been approached he would not deal with them, aside from the moral consideration. "because the price is always out of line."

Would he trade with Soviet satellites? "Why should they bother to buy when Russia gives them anything they want?" he asks.

The days when a man like Europe's Sir Basil Zaharoff, the legendary armorer king of the early 20th Century, could amass a \$100 million fortune unsupervised by any government have long since passed.

Men like Zaharoff could make millions because in those days there were no international gun controls. But today, the blunt truth is that illicit trade in weapons is just too complicated, not to mention too risky.

Arms traders are closely watched by embassy staffs, there are customs bureaus and tax men to worry about, import licenses to buy, and, in the case of Interarmco, State Department embargoes on gun trading in several areas.

It has been illegal to supply arms to any Caribbean nation since 1959, and, for the last three years Americans have been barred from the African weapons trade. These restrictions cut off two markets where smoldering political tensions had created a tremendous demand for weapons of any sort.

THEN, in 1963, came President Kennedy's assassination in Dallas... and with it a clamor for a national gun control law.

Sen. Dodd's subcommittee began to hammer out a bill, still in committee, to curb the sale of cheap, big game rifles.

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